

Commonwealth of Virginia Emergency Operations Plan Basic Plan

FOREWORD

“The Governor may adopt and implement the Commonwealth of Virginia Emergency Operations Plan which provides for state-level emergency operations in response to any type of disaster or large-scale emergency affecting Virginia and provides the framework within which more detailed emergency plans and procedures can be developed and maintained by state agencies, local governments and other organizations.” Code of Virginia §44-146.17.

The Virginia Department of Emergency Management maintains the *Commonwealth of Virginia Emergency Operations Plan (COVEOP)* and presents the plan to the Governor for adoption at least once every four years. The Governor issued Executive Order 65 in May 2004 to adopt the *COVEOP*. Following the adoption of the *National Response Plan (NRP)* in November 2004 by the U. S. Department of Homeland Security, the Commonwealth agreed to revise the *COVEOP* to align with the *NRP*. That revision included integrating previously independent response and recovery operations plans into this single plan. . The Commonwealth also agreed to ensure that the plan is in conformance with the National Incident Management System (NIMS). The Governor issued Executive Order 102 in 2005 to direct the Commonwealth to integrate NIMS into its plans and procedures. This version of the *COVEOP*, developed by the Department of Emergency Management with concurrence from the state agencies and organizations with primary and support roles in the Virginia Emergency Response/Recovery Team, is aligned with the National Response Plan framework and in compliance with the National Incident Management System.

In January 2007, the Governor issued Executive Order 44 establishing preparedness initiatives in state government, and directing all executive branch agencies to include preparedness planning, including continuity of operations planning, in their core missions and strategic plans. This *COVEOP* complies with and further implements that order.

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PREFACE

Virginia is vulnerable to a variety of hazards such as flooding, hurricanes, winter storms, and hazardous materials incidents, acts of terrorism and resource shortages. A planned and coordinated response on the part of state and local officials in support of responders in the field can save lives, protect property, and more quickly restore essential services.

The Code of Virginia, § 44-146.13 to 44-146.29:2, establishes legal authority for development and maintenance of the Commonwealth's emergency management program and organization, and defines the emergency powers, authorities, and responsibilities of the Governor and the State Coordinator. Moreover, the *Virginia Emergency Services and Disaster Laws of 2000* require that state and local governments develop and maintain current emergency operations plans (EOPs) in order to be prepared for a variety of natural and man-made hazards such as flash flooding, major river flooding, hurricanes, hazardous materials incidents, resource shortages and acts of terrorism. Executive orders by the Governor supplement the laws and establish specific plans and initiatives.

The strategies and objectives of the Emergency Management Program for the Commonwealth are established in several plans and executive orders including:

- ❖ *Secure Commonwealth Initiative Strategic Plan 2005*, a multi-year plan that sets the overall course and direction of Commonwealth Preparedness, including the emergency management program, by defining its vision, mission, goals, and objectives.
- ❖ *Commonwealth of Virginia Emergency Operations Plan (COVEOP)* is an all-discipline, all-hazards plan that establishes a single, comprehensive framework for the management of statewide incidents.
- ❖ *COV Standard Hazard Mitigation Plan*, a support annex to the *COVEOP*, which identifies hazards and analyzes the potential impacts. The plan focuses on prevention and reduction of the impacts of hazards establishing interim and long-term goals and objectives, strategies, programs and actions to avoid long-term vulnerability to the hazards.
- ❖ Hazard-specific operational plans, known as incident annexes, address hazards to which the Commonwealth is at high risk, either in frequency or impact. They include plans for emergencies related to the two nuclear power generation plants in Virginia, more than 20 hurricane-risk localities near the coast and the Chesapeake Bay, and the potential for large-scale hazardous-materials incidents, transportation incidents and terrorism incidents anywhere in the Commonwealth.
- ❖ Other hazard specific plans, developed by individual agencies to address specific incidents or pursuant to federal guidance, include a *State Floodplain Management Plan*, a *Drought Protection Plan*, and plans to address specific biological hazards such as pandemic flu and animal-borne diseases.
- ❖ Agency strategic plans focus on prioritized actions including the functions of each agency which are critical to the emergency response and recovery operations of the Commonwealth.
- ❖ Agency continuity of operations plans (COOP) address continuity of government elements, such as succession and lines of authority. They also address the procedures for protecting,

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maintaining and restoring essential functions, including those functions which are critical to emergency response and recovery operations.

- *Executive Order 7 (2002)* directs all executive branch agencies to prepare emergency response plans that address continuity of operations;
- *Executive Order 69 (2004)* directs all executive branch agencies to exercise and test their continuity of operations plans on or before September 2005;
- *Executive Order 44 (2007)* establishes preparedness initiatives in state government including a timeframe for an annual update-review-report cycle of agency continuity of operations plans.

In cooperation with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, the state plans are designed to incorporate principles of the National Incident Management System (NIMS), and align in procedures and structure with the *National Response Plan (NRP)*.

The complete *Commonwealth of Virginia Emergency Operations Plan (COVEOP)* consists of a Basic Plan with appendices, Emergency Support Function (ESF) Annexes, Support Annexes, and Incident Annexes.

The Basic Plan, using an all-hazards approach to incident management, describes the concepts and structures of response and recovery operation, identifies agencies with essential (primary) and support emergency management functions, and assigns emergency prevention, preparedness, response and recovery duties and responsibilities to departments and agencies. The Basis Plan includes the Governor's executive order that promulgates the entire *COVEOP*.

The Emergency Support Functions (ESFs) provide the structure for state interagency emergency operations in support of disaster-affected localities. ESF annexes describe the roles and responsibilities for state departments and agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGO), such as the American Red Cross and Virginia Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (VAVOAD), as ESF coordinators or as primary or support agencies. The plan identifies seventeen (17) emergency support functions, assigns primary and support agencies and organizations for each function, and explains in general terms how the Commonwealth will organize and implement those functions. ESF-5, Emergency Management, is the lead ESF in any operation involving the VERT organization. It is the leading command and control function for any activation that requires incident command, unified command, or multi-agency coordination within the VEOC or other command and coordination location or operation

Support Annexes address those functions that are applicable to every type of incident and that provide support for all ESFs. They describe the framework through which state departments and agencies, volunteer organizations and nongovernmental organizations coordinate and execute the common functional processes and administrative requirements necessary to ensure efficient and effective incident management.

Incident Annexes address contingency or hazard situations requiring specialized application of the *COVEOP*. They describe policies, situations, concepts of operations and responsibilities pertinent to incidents such as hurricanes, acts of terrorism or nuclear/radiological emergencies.

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Plan Maintenance

The coordination of planning and the compatibility of plans at the local, state and federal levels, are critical elements in the Virginia comprehensive emergency management program. All incidents are local; yet an effective response from state and federal agencies depends on compatible structures and resources and scaleable plans. The maintenance of this plan is the responsibility of the Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM). Funding assistance for the maintenance of state and local EOPs is provided by the Commonwealth of Virginia and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS). All planning is conducted in accordance with guidance provided by DHS. Emergency operations at the state and local level are compatible with the *National Response Plan (NRP)*. In the event of a major disaster, federal manpower and resources will be available to augment and supplement state and local emergency operations. During short-term and long-term recovery, additional federal support will be provided to affected local governments and individuals to assist them in the recovery process.

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I. Introduction

The *Commonwealth of Virginia Emergency Operations Plan (COVEOP)* is an all-discipline, all-hazards plan that establishes a single, comprehensive framework for the management of statewide incidents. It provides the structure and mechanisms for the coordination of state support to impacted local governments and affected individuals and businesses. It is compatible with the National Response Plan framework and provides the structure for coordinating with the federal government in the delivery of federal disaster assistance. The *COVEOP* assists in the important Commonwealth Preparedness mission of preventing or reducing the threat of terrorist attacks within the Commonwealth; reducing the vulnerability to all natural and manmade hazards; and minimizing the damage and assisting in the recovery from any type of incident that occurs.

A. Purpose

The Basic Plan of the *Commonwealth of Virginia Emergency Operations Plan* is an overview of the state's emergency response and recovery organization and policies. It provides for state-level emergency operations in response to any type of disaster or large-scale emergency affecting Virginia. It assigns duties and responsibilities to departments, agencies, and organizations for disaster mitigation, preparedness, response, recovery, and prevention. It also provides the framework within which more detailed emergency plans and procedures can be developed and maintained by both state agencies and local governments.

To ensure the state's capability to implement this plan, each agency tasked with essential emergency management responsibilities, as identified in this Basic Plan or any Incident Annex, shall develop a continuity of operations (COOP) plan that identifies the critical and time-sensitive missions, applications, processes, and functions to be recovered and continued in an emergency or disaster; including alternate operating capabilities. Agencies functions critical to the state emergency response and recovery operations shall have priority for protection and restoration.

B. Scope and Applicability

The *COVEOP* covers the full range of complex and constantly changing requirements in anticipation of or in response to threats or acts of terrorism, major disasters, and other emergencies. The *COVEOP* also provides the basis to initiate long-term community recovery and mitigation activities.

The *COVEOP* establishes interagency and multi-jurisdictional mechanisms for state agency involvement in domestic incident management operations. These mechanisms include coordinating structures and processes for incidents requiring:

- ❖ Local-to-local support through Statewide Mutual Aid;
- ❖ State support to local governments;
- ❖ State-to-state support through Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) agreements or other appropriate instruments; and
- ❖ Public and private-sector incident management integration.

This plan is applicable to all agencies of the Commonwealth of Virginia that might be requested to provide assistance or conduct operations in the context of actual or potential incidents in which the governor may declare or determine that state emergency management

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coordination is required in order to save lives, minimize damage, or otherwise assist a region, locality, community, or nongovernmental entity in response to a disaster. Moreover, this plan also provides the foundation for the organization and coordination of long-term community recovery and mitigation activities.

C. Authorities

The plan is authorized in the Code of Virginia (§44-146.17(1)). When activated by the Governor's executive order declaring a "state of emergency," this plan has the force and effect of law. As indicated in the *Virginia Emergency Services and Disaster Laws, 2004 Edition*, there are statutory authorities, regulatory rules, Opinions of the Attorney General and policies that provide the basis for Commonwealth actions and activities in the context of domestic incident management. Disaster-specific executive orders may also address individual elements of the plan. In order to request a declaration of emergency or major disaster, and to cooperate with the federal disaster assistance provided for disasters that are declared, the Governor must verify that the plan has been implemented. The plan uses the framework established by the *National Response Plan* to provide an all-hazards approach to disaster management. Although nothing in the *National Response Plan* alters the existing authorities of individual state departments or agencies of the Commonwealth of Virginia, the common framework facilitates inter-governmental coordination when both plans are implemented for an incident occurring in Virginia.

The *COVEOP* establishes the coordinating structures, processes, and protocols required to integrate the specific statutory and policy authorities of various state departments and agencies in a collective framework for action to include prevention, preparedness, and response, recovery, and mitigation activities. Appendix C provides key statutes, executive orders, directives, and guidance documents that provide additional authority and policy direction relevant to incident management.

D. Key Concepts

This section summarizes key concepts that are reflected throughout the *COVEOP*

1. Systematic and coordinated incident management, including protocols for:
 - ❖ Incident reporting;
 - ❖ Coordinated action;
 - ❖ Alert and notification;
 - ❖ Mobilization of state resources to augment existing local capabilities;
 - ❖ Operating under differing threats or threat levels; and
 - ❖ Integration of crisis and consequence management functions.
2. Proactive notification and deployment of state resources in anticipation of or in response to major events in coordination and collaboration with local, private and federal entities when possible.
3. Redundancy of resources is built into all functions of the emergency operations including the command, planning, operations, logistics, and administrative units. Plans include clear succession of authority, procedures for duplication of critical systems and protocols for utilizing alternate operational facilities.

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4. Organizing interagency efforts to minimize damage, restore impacted areas to pre-incident conditions if feasible, and/or implement programs to mitigate vulnerability to future events.
5. Coordinating incident communication, worker safety and health, private-sector involvement, and other activities that are common to the majority of incidents (see Support Annexes).
6. Organizing Emergency Support Functions (ESFs) to facilitate the delivery of critical resources, assets, and assistance. State departments and agencies are assigned to lead or support the ESFs based on authorities, resources, and capabilities.
7. Providing mechanisms for vertical and horizontal coordination, communications, and information-sharing in response to threats or incidents. These mechanisms facilitate coordination among state agencies and local governments, and with the federal government, as well as between the public and private sectors.
8. Developing detailed Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), tactical, and hazard-specific contingency plans and procedures.
9. Providing the basis for coordination of interagency and intergovernmental planning, training, exercising, assessment, coordination, and information exchange.

II. Planning Assumptions and Situations

The *Commonwealth of Virginia Emergency Operations Plan* is based on the planning assumptions, situations, considerations, and risk assessments presented in this section.

A. Assumptions

1. Incidents are typically managed at the lowest possible geographic, organizational, and jurisdictional level.
2. State agencies' capabilities to carry out response and recovery tasks are ensured through agency continuity of operations plans and procedures.
3. Emergency response and recovery activities will be initiated and conducted using the principles contained in the National Incident Management System (NIMS).
4. The combined expertise and capabilities of government at all levels, the private sector, and the nongovernmental organizations will be required to prevent, prepare for, respond to, and recover from incidents of major or catastrophic proportions.
5. Incidents including major emergencies or catastrophic events will require full coordination of operations and resources, and might:
 - a. Occur at any time with little or no warning in the context of a general or specific threat or hazard;

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- b. Require significant information-sharing at the unclassified and classified levels across multiple jurisdictions and between the public and private sectors;
 - c. Involve single or multiple jurisdictions and/or geographic areas;
 - d. Have significant statewide and/or national impact and/or require significant inter-governmental information sharing, resource coordination, and/or assistance;
 - e. Span the spectrum of incident management to include prevention, preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation;
 - f. Involve multiple, highly varied hazards or threats on a local, regional, statewide or national scale;
 - g. Result in numerous casualties, fatalities, displaced people, property loss, significant damage to the environment, and disruption of economy and normal life support systems, essential public services, and basic infrastructure;
 - h. Impact critical infrastructures across sectors;
 - i. Overwhelm capabilities of state agencies, local governments, and private-sector infrastructure owners and operators;
 - j. Attract a sizeable influx of independent, spontaneous volunteers and supplies;
 - k. Require extremely short-notice state asset coordination and response timelines; and
 - l. Require prolonged, sustained incident management operations and support activities requisite to long term community recovery and mitigation.
6. Top priorities for incident management are to:
- a. Save lives and protect the health and safety of the public, responders, and recovery workers;
 - b. Ensure security of the Commonwealth;
 - c. Prevent an imminent incident, including acts of terrorism, from occurring;
 - d. Protect and restore critical infrastructure and key resources;
 - e. Protect property and mitigate damages and impacts to individuals, communities, and the environment;
 - f. Facilitate recovery of individuals, families, businesses, communities, governments, and the environment; and
 - g. Manage public expectations regarding response activities.

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7. The provision of state assistance and the deployment of state resources for emergency response are dependent upon the receipt of prompt and accurate situational information from local officials; the state may deploy on-site advance teams to local jurisdictions to assess severity of impact and expedite the delivery of state resources;
8. The Governor will issue an executive order declaring that a “state of emergency” exists in all or a portion of the Commonwealth of Virginia; the order implements the *Commonwealth of Virginia Emergency Operations Plan*;
9. The severity of the impact on state and local resources might necessitate a request for federal assistance; factors that might determine the need for federal involvement in response and recovery might include:
 - a. The state or local needs and/or requests for external support, or that exceeds ability to manage the incident;
 - b. The economic ability of the state and the affected localities to recover from the incident;
 - c. The type or location of the incident;
 - d. The severity and magnitude of the incident; and
 - e. The need to protect the public health or welfare or the environment.
10. In incidents for which the President has declared an emergency or major disaster, federal support to states is delivered in accordance with relevant provisions of the Stafford Act (see Appendix C, Authorities and References). For procedures to request federal assistance for emergency response and recovery, as authorized in the Stafford Act, see Appendix E.
11. As a signatory to the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC), the Commonwealth may participate in interstate cooperation including the requesting of response and recovery resources from other states and the sending of resources to other states. The Code of Virginia (§ 44-146.28:1) authorizes reimbursement for services the Commonwealth requests from other states and payment for services sent to other states through EMAC.

B. Situations and Considerations

1. *The Commonwealth of Virginia Emergency Services and Disaster Laws, 2004 Edition*, requires that the state and each city and county within the state establish an emergency management organization and that they develop and maintain a current Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) structured around existing constitutional government.
2. The negative effects on Virginia’s residents and its economy of natural disasters such as hurricanes, floods, winter storms and wildfires are increasing due to increased urban development in vulnerable coastal areas, industrial expansion, traffic congestion and widespread use and transport of hazardous materials. These factors also increase the risk of man-made emergencies such as hazardous materials accidents, gas pipeline accidents,

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- power failures, resource shortages and environmental contamination. In addition, the terrorist attack on the Pentagon in Arlington County in 2001 made the threat of terrorism more prominent in the list of potential human caused disasters in Virginia.
3. In Virginia, counties and independent cities have the primary responsibility for emergency operations and will commit all available resources to save lives and minimize property damage. Should local emergency response capabilities be overwhelmed, outside assistance is available, either through mutual aid agreements with nearby jurisdictions, members of the Commonwealth's Statewide Mutual Aid Program or from the state through the Virginia Emergency Operations Center (VEOC).
 4. The emergency management mission of Virginia state government, in cooperation with federal agencies and local governments, is to plan and prepare for emergency operations which will ensure that casualties and property damage will be minimized and normal operations will be restored as rapidly as possible in the event of a large scale emergency or disaster situation.
 5. If the need for resources exceeds the capabilities of the localities and the state, the Governor may request federal assistance. The Governor may request the President to declare an emergency or a major disaster and may request assistance for individuals and for public entities, state agencies and local governments.
 6. Once the President declares a major disaster, federal disaster assistance may be available for such items as the repair and reconstruction of buildings and roads or for individual assistance to persons displaced from their homes. Assistance may also be available for local and state agencies to implement mitigation measures to reduce the probability of future damages. A substantial and well documented federal-state-local coordination effort is required to implement such assistance.

C. Hazard Identification and Risk Analysis

Preparedness, response and recovery, and mitigation strategies are based on analyses of the known hazards in Virginia. Below is a table of natural hazards and their associated risks. For more detailed information, see Support Annex #3 - *Virginia Standard Hazard Mitigation Plan*. Man-made hazards are addressed in Incident Annex #1- *Hazardous Materials and Terrorism Consequence Management Plan* and Incident Annex #3- *Nuclear/Radiological Emergency Response Plan*.

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TABLE 1-1. Natural Hazards Addressed in the *Virginia Standard Hazard Mitigation Plan*¹

Hazard	Type	Relative Risk Category
Blizzards/ Winter Storms	Including winter storms, Nor'easters, ice storms, and excessive cold	High
Coastal/ Shoreline Erosion	(Addressed under flooding)	Medium
Dam Failure	(Addressed under flooding)	Low
Drought	Including excessive heat	Medium
Earthquake		Low
Flooding	Coastal	Medium
	Riverine	High
High Wind/ Windstorm	Including Thunderstorms and Lightning	Low
Hurricane	Hurricane, generally	Medium
	Tropical Depressions	Low
	Tropical Storms	Medium
	Category 1	Medium
	Category 2	High
	Category 3	Low
Land Subsidence	Karst only	Low
Landslide		Low
Tornado	Tornadoes, generally and hail	High
	F0	Medium
	F1	High
	F2	Low
Wildfire		High

III. Roles and Responsibilities

A. State Agencies and Local Governments

Local authorities have primary responsibility for managing emergencies. Police, fire, emergency medical and health, emergency management, public works, environmental response, and other personnel are often the first to arrive and the last to leave an incident site. In some cases, state and federal assets may be used to advise or assist local officials in accordance with agency authorities

¹ The Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (HIRA) for the *Virginia Standard Hazard Mitigation Plan* was conducted primarily by the Virginia Tech Center for Geospatial Information Technology.

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and procedures. Mutual aid agreements provide mechanisms to mobilize and employ resources from neighboring jurisdictions to support the incident command.

When local resources and capabilities are overwhelmed, local officials may request assistance from the state. When state resources are overwhelmed, the Governor may request federal assistance under a Presidential disaster or emergency declaration. Summarized below are the responsibilities of the Governor and chief executive officer of the local government or other entity.

Governor

As the chief executive officer of the Commonwealth of Virginia, the Governor is responsible for the public safety and welfare of the people of the Commonwealth of Virginia. The powers and duties of the Governor in emergency management are addressed in the Code of Virginia (§44-146.17). The Governor -

- ❖ Is responsible for coordinating state resources to address the full spectrum of actions to prevent, prepare for, respond to, and recover from incidents in an all-hazards context to include terrorism, natural disasters, accidents, and other contingencies;
- ❖ Through the emergency operations plan, establishes the Virginia Emergency Response/Recovery Team (VERT) and assigns duties and responsibilities to state agencies;
- ❖ May declare a “state of emergency” by executive order. The Governor has police powers to make, amend, and rescind orders and regulations; he may direct and compel evacuation of all or part of the populace from any stricken or threatened area;
- ❖ Provides leadership and plays a key role in communicating to the public and in helping people, businesses, and organizations cope with the consequences of any type of declared emergency within the jurisdiction of the Commonwealth;
- ❖ Encourages participation in mutual aid and implements authorities for the state to enter into mutual aid agreements with other states to facilitate resource-sharing;
- ❖ Is the Commander-in-Chief of the Commonwealth military forces (National Guard when in State Active Duty or Title 32 Status and the authorized State militias);
- ❖ May request federal assistance when it becomes clear that the capabilities of the Commonwealth will be insufficient or have been exceeded or exhausted;
- ❖ May expend “sum sufficient” monies; and
- ❖ May provide financial assistance to localities.

By executive order, the Governor has directed all executive branch agencies to develop, maintain and exercise continuity plans and procedures to ensure the capabilities of the Commonwealth of Virginia to carry out essential services, including emergency and disaster response and recovery.

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Local Government Official or Chief Executive/Administrative Officer

The Code of Virginia (§ 44-146.19) designates powers and duties for emergency management to political subdivisions. Each entity shall have a director of emergency management who is either the mayor or city manager of an independent city, or in the case of a county, is either a member of the board of supervisors or the chief administrative officer.

The local emergency management director:

- ❖ Is responsible for coordinating local resources to address the full spectrum of actions to prevent, prepare for, respond to, and recover from incidents involving all hazards including terrorism, natural disasters, accidents, and other contingencies;
- ❖ May suspend local laws and ordinances, such as to establish a curfew, direct evacuations, and, in coordination with the local health authority, to order quarantine;
- ❖ Provides leadership and plays a key role in communicating to the public, and in helping people, businesses, and organizations cope with the consequences of any type of domestic incident within the jurisdiction;
- ❖ Negotiates and enters into mutual aid agreements with other jurisdictions to facilitate resource-sharing;
- ❖ Requests state assistance when local capabilities have been exceeded or exhausted; and
- ❖ Coordinates with state and federal officials after a disaster to implement recovery strategies and programs.

B. Nongovernmental and Volunteer Organizations

Nongovernmental and voluntary organizations (NGOs) collaborate with first responders, governments at all levels, and other agencies and organizations providing relief services to sustain life, reduce physical and emotional distress, and promote recovery of disaster victims. In some localities, designated non-government organizations, such as the American Red Cross, provide specific disaster relief services during response and recovery in cooperation with local officials. In many localities, organized groups of NGOs coordinate long-term recovery activities.

The Virginia Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VAVOAD) is a statewide consortium of faith-based and non-profit organizations that are active in disaster relief. The VAVOAD represents its member organizations on the Virginia Emergency Response/Recovery Team (VERT) and communicates with the many voluntary organizations that provide significant capabilities to incident management and response and recovery efforts at all levels.

C. Private Sector

Under the Virginia Emergency Response Team (VERT) concept, primary and support agencies coordinate with the private sector to effectively share information, form courses of action, and incorporate available resources to prevent, prepare for, respond to, and recover from any threat or actual disaster, emergency, or incident of significance.

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The roles, responsibilities, and participation of the private sector during major incidents vary based on the nature of the organization and the type and impact of the incident. The table below summarizes the roles of private sector organizations.

TABLE 1-2. Roles of Private-Sector Organizations

Organization	Role
Impacted Organization or Infrastructure	Private-sector organizations might be affected by direct or indirect consequences of the incident, including privately owned critical infrastructure, key resources, and those main private-sector organizations that are significant to local, regional, and national economic recovery from the incident. Examples of privately owned infrastructure include transportation, telecommunications, private utilities, financial institutions, and health care facilities.
Response Resource	Private-sector organizations provide response resources (donated or compensated) during an incident—including specialized teams, equipment, and advanced technologies—through local public-private emergency plans, mutual aid agreements, or incident specific requests from government and private-sector-volunteered initiatives.
Regulated and/or Responsible Party	Owners/operators of certain regulated facilities or hazardous operations may bear responsibilities under the law for preparing for and preventing incidents from occurring, and responding to an incident once it occurs. For example, owners/operators of Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC)-regulated nuclear facilities and businesses that manufacture, store and/or transport hazardous materials must adhere to federal planning, response and recovery regulations.
State/Local Emergency Organization Member	Private-sector organizations may serve as an active partner in local and state emergency preparedness and response organizations and activities

Private Sector Responsibilities: Private-sector organizations are critical to the capabilities of the VERT. They support the *COVEOP* by sharing information with the various state agencies, identifying risks, performing vulnerability assessments, developing emergency response and business continuity plans, enhancing their overall readiness, implementing appropriate prevention and protection programs, and donating or otherwise providing goods and services through contractual arrangement or government purchases to assist in response to and recovery from an incident.

Certain organizations are required by existing law and regulation to bear the cost of planning and response to incidents, regardless of cause. In some cases, these private-sector organizations are expected to mobilize and employ the resources necessary and available in accordance with their plans to address the consequences of incidents at their own facilities or incidents for which they are otherwise responsible.

Response Resources: Unless the response role is inherently governmental (e.g., law enforcement, etc.), private-sector organizations are encouraged to develop and maintain capabilities to respond to and manage a complete spectrum of incidents and emergencies. The Commonwealth's emergency management community maintains ongoing interaction with the critical infrastructure and key resources industries to provide coordination for prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery activities. When practical, or when required by state or Federal law, private-sector representatives are included in planning and exercises. The state or local government may, when they have contractual relationships, use government funds to direct private-sector response resources.

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VERT Coordination: The primary state agency for each ESF maintains working relations with its associated private-sector counterparts through partnership committees or other means (e.g., ESF #2, Communications – telecommunications industry; ESF #10, Oil and Hazardous Materials Response – oil and hazardous materials industries; etc.).

D. Citizen Involvement

Strong partnerships with citizen groups and organizations provide support for incident management prevention, preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation. Local citizen groups provide capabilities to augment governmental response and recovery activities.

At the state level, the Virginia Citizen Corps brings an emergency management focus to efforts by groups and individuals and a link to national service initiatives. Through education, training, and volunteer service, groups affiliated with Virginia Citizen Corps help make communities safer, stronger, and better prepared to address the threats of terrorism, crime, public health issues, and disasters of all kinds.

Local Citizen Corps Councils implement programs affiliated with state and national Citizen Corps, including Community Emergency Response Teams (CERTs), Medical Reserve Corps, Neighborhood Watch, and Volunteers in Police Service (VIPS). They provide opportunities for people with special skills and interests, develop targeted outreach for special-needs groups, and organize special projects and community events. The Citizen Corps program expands the resources and materials available to local communities through partnerships that offer resources for public education, outreach, and training; represent volunteers interested in helping to make their communities safer; or offer volunteer service opportunities to support first responders, disaster relief activities, and community safety efforts.

A safe and prepared citizenry is a priority of the Commonwealth of Virginia. Outreach programs, through state agencies, local governments, NGOs and private entities, promote awareness of personal and community risks and also the principle of personal responsibility. Preparedness information is available to Virginia residents from many sources including the Internet. Crisis emergency information is disseminated immediately when a threat or incident occurs.

Citizens groups are also critical to the community recovery process after a disaster. The programs designed and implemented by federal, state and local governments, insurance providers and NGOs can never completely meet the needs of every individual. Local disaster recovery task forces or “unmet needs” groups can provide an effective and efficient forum for pooling community resources and coordinating the delivery of available resources to individuals and families in need. Citizens within a community are both the first and the last to respond to the needs of their neighbors.

IV. Concept of Operations

A. General

This section describes the Commonwealth of Virginia emergency management coordinating structures, processes, and protocols employed for incident management. These coordinating structures and processes are designed to enable execution of the responsibilities of the Governor through the appropriate state departments and agencies, and to integrate Federal, state, local, non-

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governmental agencies and organizations, and private-sector efforts into a comprehensive statewide approach to incident management.

A basic premise of the *COVEOP* is that incidents are generally handled at the jurisdictional level closest to the event. Police, fire, emergency medical and health, emergency management, and other personnel are responsible for responding to local incidents. In some instances, a state or federal agency with principal activities or facilities in a local area may act as a first responder and may provide direction or assistance consistent with its specific statutory authorities and responsibilities. In the vast majority of incidents, local resources will operate under the umbrella of a mutual aid agreement or compact to provide the first line of emergency response and incident management support.

The *COVEOP* and local emergency operations plans (EOPs) are founded upon the concept that emergency operations will begin at the city and county level, and that state assistance will be provided upon request when emergency or disaster needs exceed local capabilities. Situations in which several localities are threatened or impacted concurrently usually involve the state from the onset. If the state is overwhelmed, as with a major flood or hurricane, the state may ask for federal assistance. At each level, the government should officially declare a 'state of emergency' to exist in order to request assistance. A local emergency declaration indicates that local resources capable of handling the situation are fully committed before state assistance is requested. Likewise, state resources should be fully committed before federal assistance is requested. Exceptions are made to these procedures when localities request state assistance with search and rescue or hazardous materials response.

This plan identifies the role of the state government before, during, and after a disaster or major emergency. It establishes the concepts and policies under which all elements of state government and its political subdivisions will operate during emergencies. It provides a basis for the preparation of more detailed plans and procedures and for state/local emergency management training programs.

Each functional part of the plan, the Emergency Support Function (ESF) Annexes, includes a concept of operations and an action checklist to help each function or agency prepare for emergency operations. Agencies with primary emergency duties and responsibilities are also expected to develop and maintain separately published and more detailed standard operating procedures (SOP) as needed.

The following general principles apply to all parts of the *COVEOP*:

- ❖ Direction of emergency operations will be exercised by the level of government affected closest to the event.
- ❖ State agencies having local emergency responsibilities will provide assistance directly to political subdivisions where possible. Those agencies having divisions, districts, or local offices will direct their area supervisors to participate in the local emergency planning process and become a part of the local emergency response organization, as appropriate.
- ❖ On-scene coordination of emergency response will be accomplished within the Incident Command System (ICS) framework allowing for the incorporation of local, state, federal agencies and other responsible parties into one organizational framework called the Unified Command.

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- ❖ Assistance from state agencies will be requested from and coordinated by the Virginia Emergency Operations Center (VEOC).
- ❖ State assistance is supplemental to, not a substitute for, relief provided by the political subdivisions.
- ❖ All appropriate locally available forces and resources will be fully committed by the affected local government before requesting assistance from a higher level of government.
- ❖ Support furnished to local government from state agencies will be assigned on a mission-type basis and will be under the operational control of the department, agency, or office furnishing the support.

During normal operations, it is the responsibility of the Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM) to manage the VEOC from which the Governor, or his designee, can direct and control emergency operations statewide. The State Coordinator of Emergency Management, head of VDEM, is the Governor's designee to manage the VEOC and to coordinate the state's response to all emergencies and disasters. VDEM develops detailed procedures for VEOC operations, manages an ongoing training program for the VEOC staff, and maintains adequate facilities and equipment for VEOC operations. Agencies assigned responsibilities in the VEOC designate staff to respond to the VEOC and to participate in training.

In time of emergency, VDEM provides (1) a centralized state government emergency operations, including augmentation of the VEOC, in order to coordinate the delivery of resources to local governments, (2) advice and counsel to the Governor, or his designee, to formulate policy, establish priorities, collect and analyze information, and disseminate information, and (3) communications with the federal government related to conditions or developing situations related to the emergency.

The VEOC will be under the control of the State Coordinator of Emergency Management, who reports directly to the Governor or his designee. The supporting VEOC staff is the Virginia Emergency Response/Recovery Team (VERT) composed of employees of VDEM, other designated state agencies, representatives of VAVOAD, and designated private sector entities. As the situation warrants, federal agencies may also have representatives in the VEOC during emergencies.

B. Overall Coordination of Virginia Emergency Response Team (VERT)

Agencies of Virginia state government that have been assigned primary and/or support emergency response or recovery duties and responsibilities are collectively known as the Virginia Emergency Response/Recovery Team (VERT). All VERT agencies must develop and maintain their designated part(s) of the *COVEOP*. Local governments must also maintain their local emergency operations plans (EOP) in accordance with the guidance and operational concepts set forth in the *COVEOP*. Incident annexes to the *COVEOP* and local EOPs will contain more detailed procedures as needed, to include increased readiness action checklists and specific reporting requirements.

The Code of Virginia (Title 44-146) provides that emergency management organizations and operations will be structured around existing constitutional government. The Governor is the

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Director of Emergency Management for the Commonwealth. The Governor appoints a State Coordinator of Emergency Management to head the Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM). The State Coordinator appoints the VERT Coordinator, who manages the VEOC and coordinates response activities, and the VERT Recovery Manager, who coordinates state recovery activities for a disaster that is declared by the President as authorized by the Stafford Act. For a presidentially declared disaster, the State Coordinator is usually designated the State Coordinating Officer (SCO) by the Governor.

C. VERT Organization Structure

The state organization for emergency operations includes:

1. The Governor and his immediate staff.
2. State resources coordinated by the Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM) and the VERT. These agencies respond from the VEOC in Richmond. The first alternate VEOC is also in Richmond. For recovery operations the VERT Recovery Manager and staff are co-located with federal officials in a Joint Field Office (JFO).
3. State departments and agencies assigned emergency responsibilities in the COVEOP. This plan identifies emergency support functions (ESF) and assigns primary and support agencies for each function. (See Tab A: State Emergency Support Function Matrix).
4. Regional coordination agencies. State agency emergency coordination teams are organized within each of the seven emergency management regions. The agencies regional staffs collaborate in the development of regional coordination plans.
5. Local governments. Each city and county is required to have an emergency management organization. Locally available manpower, materials, equipment, and facilities are identified in each local emergency operations plan (EOP). Non-affected localities may be requested to provide assistance through the Statewide Mutual Aid Program.
6. Federal agencies upon request within their statutory authority.
7. Non-governmental organizations designated in the COVEOP and/or affiliated with ESFs. Some voluntary agencies enter into agreements with the Commonwealth of Virginia to perform specific disaster functions, including the American Red Cross, the Salvation Army, the Civil Air Patrol and the amateur radios organizations. Other voluntary organizations are affiliated with the Virginia VAVOAD or regional or local voluntary alliances.
8. Private Sector (as appropriate).
 - a. Private infrastructure industries.
 - b. Private individuals.

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**Tab A
STATE EMERGENCY SUPPORT FUNCTION (ESF) MATRIX**

ESF	Scope
ESF #1 – Transportation Primary – Transportation Support – Aviation; Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel District; General Services; Military Affairs; Mines, Minerals & Energy; Motor Vehicles; Rail & Public Transportation; State Police; Virginia Port Authority; Civil Air Patrol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State and civil transportation support • Transportation Safety • Coordination of restoration, recovery and reconstruction of transportation infrastructure • Movement restrictions • Damage and impact assessment
ESF #2 – Communications Primary – Information Technology Support – Aviation; Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel District; General Services; Military Affairs; Mines, Minerals & Energy; DMV; Rail & Public Transportation; State Police; Transportation; Virginia Port Authority; Civil Air Patrol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination with telecommunications industry • Restoration/repair of telecommunications infrastructure • Protection, restoration, & maintenance of state cyber & information technology resources
ESF #3 – Public Works and Engineering Primary – Military Affairs Support – Environmental Quality; Emergency Management; General Services; Health; Mines, Minerals & Energy; Transportation; Professional Engineers Emergency Response Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructure protection and emergency repair • Damage and impact assessment • Infrastructure restoration and reconstruction • Engineering services, construction management • Critical infrastructure liaison • Recovery infrastructure assistance
ESF #4 – Firefighting Primary – Fire Programs; Forestry Support – Conservation and Recreation; DEQ; Military Affairs; State Police; DHCD-State Fire Marshal's Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Firefighting activities on state lands • Resource support to rural and urban firefighting operations
ESF #5 – Emergency Management Primary – Emergency Management Support – Environmental Quality; Forestry; Military Affairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination of incident management efforts • Issuance of mission assignments • Coordinate notification/deployment of human capital • Financial management
ESF #6 – Mass Care, Housing, and Human Services Primary – Social Services (VDSS) Support - American Red Cross; Criminal Justice Services; VDEM; General Services; Health; Higher Education Institutions in Virginia; Housing & Community Development; DMHMRSAS; Military Affairs; VDACS; Virginia State Police; VITA; Virginia VOAD; The Salvation Army; Criminal Injuries Compensation Fund (Workers Comp. Commission)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mass care and sheltering • Temporary housing • Coordination of repair and restoration of housing • Human services • Recovery assistance to individuals & households • Family Assistance Center
ESF #7 – Resource Support Primary – VDEM Support – VDACS; Aviation, Corrections; Criminal Justice Services; Fire Programs; Forestry; General Services; Health; Housing & Community Development; Military Affairs; Motor Vehicles; State Police; Transportation; Virginia VOAD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resource Support (facility space, office equipment and supplies, contracting services, etc.)
ESF #8 – Health and Medical Services Primary – Health Support – American Red Cross; VDACS; DEQ; General Services; Health Professions; DMHMRSAS; Military Affairs; State Police; DSS; DGIF; Virginia Hospital and Healthcare Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public health services • Medical services • Mental health services • Mortuary services

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ESF #9 – Search and Rescue Primary – Emergency Management Support – Fire Programs; State Police	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Life-saving assistance • Search and rescue
ESF #10 – Oil and Hazardous Materials Response Primary – Emergency Management; Environmental Quality Support – Health; Labor and Industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oil & hazardous materials (chemical, biological, radiological, etc.) response • Environmental safety and short- and long-term cleanup • Health and safety of emergency workers
ESF #11 – Agriculture and Natural Resources Primary – Agriculture Support – Conservation & Recreation; Corrections; Environmental Quality; Forestry; DGIF; General Services; Health; Historic Resources; Marine Resources; DMHMRSAS; Military Affairs; DSS; State Police; VAVOAD (Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters); Transportation, VA Cooperative Extension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nutrition assistance • Animal and plant disease/pest response • Food safety and security • Natural & cultural resources protection & restoration • Historic properties protection and restoration • Animal care and control (pets, livestock, wildlife)
ESF #12 – Energy Primary – State Corporation Commission Support – Mines, Minerals and Energy; Emergency Management; Information Technologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy infrastructure assessment, repair, and restoration • Energy industry utilities coordination • Energy forecast
ESF #13 – Public Safety and Security Primary – State Police Support – ABC; Conservation & Recreation; Corrections; Criminal Justice Services; Forestry; Game & Inland Fisheries; Marine Resources; Military Affairs; Motor Vehicles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facility and resource security • Security planning; technical & resource assistance • Public safety/security support • Support to access, traffic, and crowd control • Health and safety of disaster workers
ESF #14 – Long Term Community Recovery Primary – Short Term: Emergency Management Long Term: Economic Crisis Strike Force (Secretary of Commerce and Trade) Support – Education; Emergency Management; Housing & Community Development; Corrections; DMHMRSAS; DSS; VEC; SCC-Bureau of Insurance; Virginia VOAD; Economic Development Partnership; Business Assistance; VDACS; Medical Assistance Services; SCHEV/VCCS; VDOT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social and economic impact assessment • Partner with FEMA and SBA for short term federal disaster assistance programs • Long-term community recovery assistance to local governments & the private sector • Coordination of COV role in the reconstruction and redevelopment of impacted areas • Mitigation analysis and program implementation
ESF #15 – External Affairs Primary – Emergency Management Support – Fire Programs; Health; Military Affairs; Motor Vehicles; State Police; Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency public information and protective action guidance • Incident information to the public • Media and community relations • Elected officials liaison
ESF #16 – Military Support Primary – Military Affairs Support – Army National Guard; Air National Guard; Virginia Defense Force	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Translate civilian missions into military missions • Provide military resources • Plan, coordinate, and control mission assignments and utilization of Virginia Militia.
ESF #17 – Volunteer and Donations Management Primary – Emergency Management Support – American Red Cross, Virginia VOAD, Adventist Community Services, Virginia Office of Volunteer and Community Service, Virginia Volunteer Center, Virginia Citizen Corps Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assures expeditious delivery of donated good to affected areas • Coordinates response and recovery efforts as related to volunteers, both convergent and pre-assigned

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D. Principal COVEOP Organizational Elements

This section describes the major organizational elements for COVEOP coordination and delineates the Commonwealth's role in emergency *response* and *recovery* operations and the Virginia Emergency Response/Recovery Team.

Response activities address immediate public safety and public health conditions. They include life-saving and protective actions taken before, during and immediately after an incident, as well as emergency repairs and modifications to critical infrastructure.

Coordination of evacuation and sheltering operations will be accomplished by the **Virginia Evacuation Coordination Team for Operational Readiness** (VECTOR) within the Operations Section of the VERT. VECTOR represents several key agencies including VDOT, VSP, Virginia National Guard, and VDEM.

The **Government Assistance Coordination Cell** will relocate and manage VDEM Regional Coordinators to provide maximum support to impacted localities. It will also coordinate the mobilization of trained Virginia Cooperative Extension Service (VCES) staff to form state/federal teams should FEMA activate its program of State Liaison Officers. The GACC will also coordinate the entry of state/federal teams into localities with the goal to minimize disruption to local response and recovery efforts. During state Response Operations, the GACC will be located in the VEOC or can operate in a mobile capacity. With the transfer to Recover Operations, the GACC will operate as part of a Joint Field Office.

Recovery activities relate to economic well-being and community restoration and redevelopment. They include direct assistance to individuals as well as reimbursement to communities for the costs of emergency preparedness and response actions. A central issue to all activities is the accountability of local and state agencies in documenting expenses for emergency operations and programs dealing with the consequences of disaster events. In practice, the response and recovery periods (and the associated activities) overlap in a given event. Government agencies must prepare to coordinate and resource both types of activities during pre-emergency planning and post-emergency operations. As localities and state agencies assess damages and report to the VEOC, a **Recovery Transition Team** analyzes the reports and determines whether the damages warrant a request for federal assistance. (See Appendix E) To make the determination, the Team coordinates with DHS/FEMA to deploy joint federal-state teams to conduct Preliminary Damage Assessments (PDA).

A natural disaster or act of terrorism, for which the Governor has declared a state of emergency, may create an "economic disaster" as defined in the *Code* (§ 2.2-205.1.E). The governor may direct the Secretary of Commerce and Trade to deploy the **Economic Crisis Strike Force**. The strike force was established in 2006 to respond as needed to economic disasters in Virginia communities by assisting localities in developing short-term and long-term strategies for addressing the crisis and providing a single point of contact for citizens in affected communities.

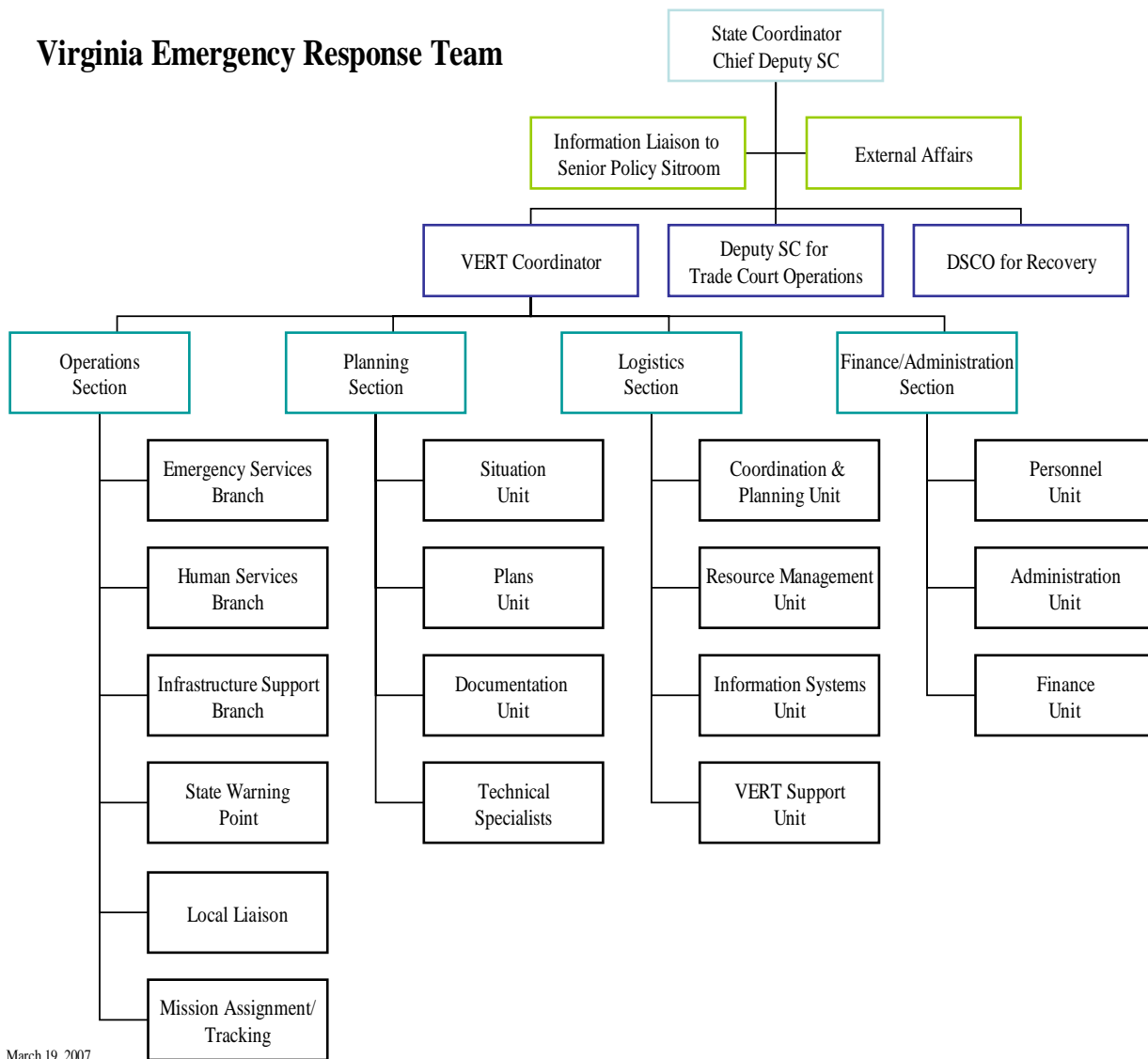
The primary emergency response and recovery mission of the Virginia Emergency Response/Recovery Team (VERT) is to support local government emergency response and disaster recovery operations by coordinating state, federal and private sector resources.

The Virginia Emergency Response/Recovery Team (VERT) is responsible for overall management of state response and recovery activities and utilizes NIMS to accomplish the critical

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missions required by the event. The VERT acts on behalf of the Governor in directing the state's response, assessing and analyzing the threat and status, establishing priorities and managing resources. The VERT organizational charts for response (Tab B) and recovery (Tab C) are on the following pages.

**Tab B
VERT Organization for Response**

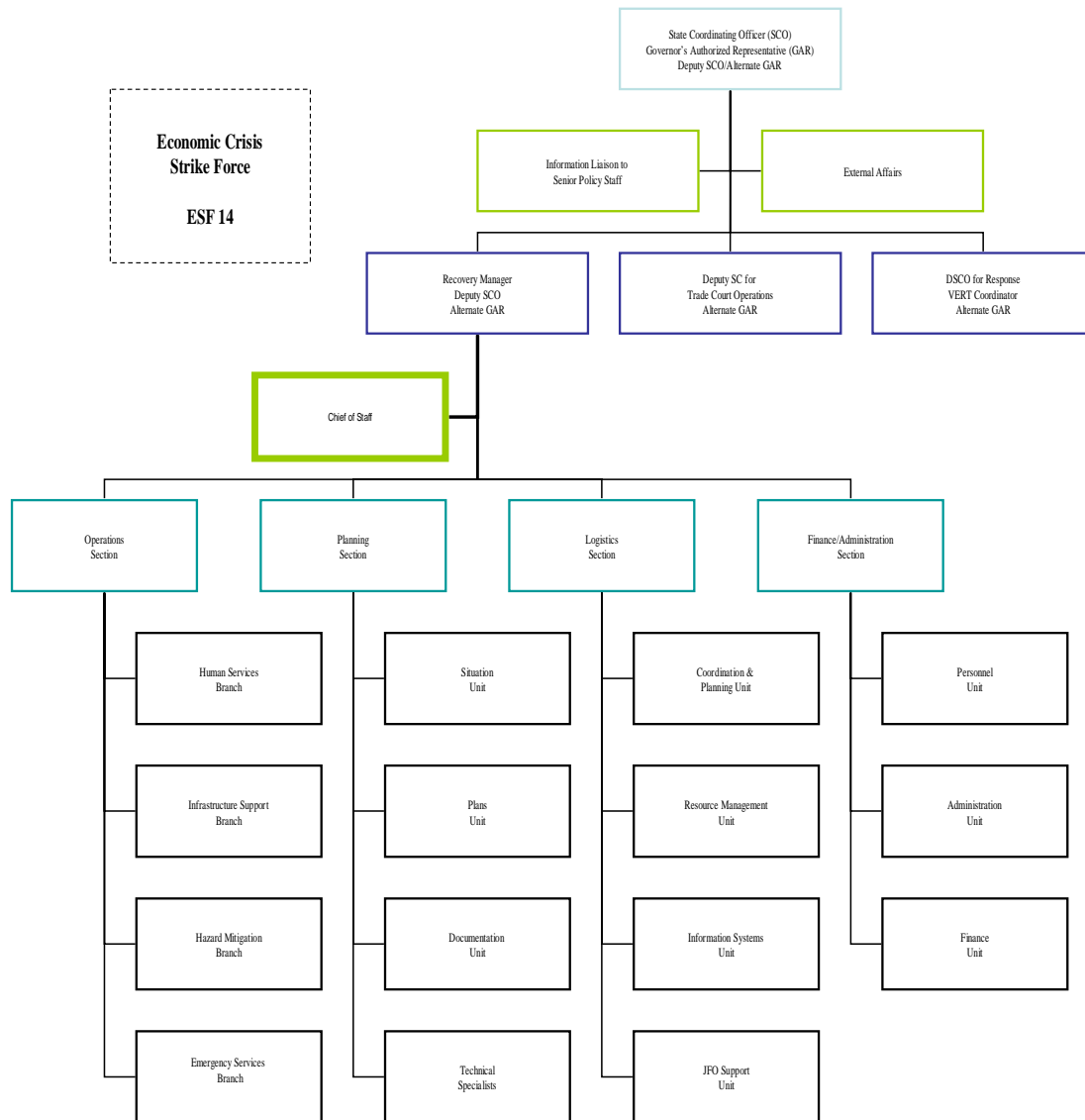


The ESF structure continues from response into the recovery phase although the activities and focus within an ESF might change. For instance, the ‘housing’ activities of ESF #6 are focused on sheltering and emergency housing during the response phase, but during recovery the focus is on restoration of permanent housing.

If an incident is declared an emergency or major disaster by the President, the Commonwealth participates with the U.S Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and other appropriate federal agencies in establishing a Joint Field Office (JFO) near the disaster site. (See Appendix E)

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Tab C
VERT Organization for Recovery



In recovery, the JFO Operations Section primarily focuses on the delivery of federal assistance programs authorized by The Stafford Act. (See Appendix E) There might also be continuing response activities in Operations. If the event is of sufficient scope and severity to impact the economic stability of a community or a region of the state, the Governor may convene the Economic Crisis Strike Force (ECSF), headed by the Secretary of Commerce and Trade, and initiate the actions of ESF #14 Long-term Community Recovery.

For incidents that do not meet the level of impact to result in a federal declaration, state recovery programs may be implemented with or without a field office near the disaster site. The Code of Virginia (§ 44-146.28) authorizes a state program to help local governments recover their costs

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associated with the restoration of eligible public facilities. The program may be implemented when eligible damages do not meet the financial impact threshold required by the federal program, but do place a substantial financial burden on the local government. The program is “considered as a program of last resort for those local jurisdictions that cannot meet the full cost.”²

In incidents where there are uninsured losses to private properties, residential or commercial, but there is not a presidential declaration of major disaster under the Stafford Act, the Small Business Administration may declare a disaster and set up disaster loan application centers near the area of impact. There are other federal and state emergency assistance programs that may apply without a presidential declaration of major disaster. (See Appendix E)

V. Incident Management Actions

When a disaster strikes, it might affect its victims in many ways, causing many problems in response and obstacles to recovery. The Commonwealth of Virginia is dedicated to providing assistance to local governments and their citizens throughout the period between impact and recovery. Disaster recovery efforts are carried out by many federal, state, and local government agencies in partnerships with private and non-profit organizations.

A. Actions

Incident management begins with identification of a risk or threat and concludes when those impacted have been restored to normalcy. Actions include notification and warning, activation of the VERT, response actions, assessment of impact, and request for federal assistance, recovery actions, mitigation actions and long-term community recovery. These actions do not necessarily occur in sequential order; many occur concurrently in response to single or multiple threats or incidents.

1. Notification and Assessment

- State agencies, local governments, private-sector, and nongovernmental organizations report threats, incidents, and potential incidents using established communications and reporting channels.
- The Virginia Emergency Operations Center (VEOC) receives threat and operational information regarding incidents or potential incidents and makes an initial determination to implement Federal information-sharing and incident management protocols.
- Public announcements, including watches, warnings, and other emergency bulletins, are issued by various agencies based on their statutory missions and authorities.

2. Activation of the VERT

The VEOC receives reports of conditions that threaten to severely impact the state, or reports of actual hazardous conditions occurring in the state, or requests for assistance from one or more local governments. The VERT Coordinator in consultation with the State Coordinating Officer and Deputy State Coordinating Officer augments the staff of the VEOC to an appropriate level and may request certain state agencies to send

² Code of Virginia §44-146.28(a)

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representatives to the VEOC. Under some threats or conditions, federal officials respond immediately and are present in the VEOC.

Based on an analysis of the information received, the State Coordinator recommends to the Governor that he declare a state of emergency to exist so that state resources can be immediately prepared or deployed to impacted areas. As authorized by the Code of Virginia, the Governor issues an executive order declaring that a state of emergency exists and activating this plan. (See Appendix E)

3. Response Actions

Once an incident occurs, the priorities shift from prevention, preparedness, and incident mitigation to immediate and short-term response activities to preserve life, property, the environment, and the social, economic, and political structure of the community. In the context of a terrorist threat, simultaneous activities are initiated to assess regional and national-level impacts, as well as to assess and take appropriate action to prevent and protect against other potential threats.

The VEOC directs state response activities that address the short-term, direct effects of an incident. These activities include immediate actions to preserve life, property, and the environment; meet basic human needs, and maintain the social, economic, and political structure of the affected community.

Response actions also include protective actions such as immediate law enforcement, fire, ambulance, and emergency medical service actions; emergency flood fighting; evacuations; transportation system detours; emergency public information; actions taken to minimize additional damage; urban search and rescue; the establishment of facilities for mass care including shelters and feeding operations; the provision of public health and medical services, food, ice, water, and other emergency essentials; debris clearance; the emergency restoration of critical infrastructure; control, containment, and removal of environmental contamination; and protection of responder health and safety.

4. Assess Damages and Analyze Impact

An assessment of the impact of an incident begins at the local level. Local officials are required to submit situation reports to the VEOC throughout the course of the incident, and to send an Initial Damage Assessment (IDA) to the VEOC within 72 hours of the impact of the event. As the situation changes and new information becomes available, local officials will update the VEOC. The information should be submitted to the VEOC ideally through WebEOC or on the standard forms provided by VDEM. The VEOC may send state staff, from VDEM, DOF, Health VNG or other agencies to assist with the local assessments or verify initial reports.

The VEOC staff summarizes the damage assessments from all sources and analyzes the impact of the incident on localities and on the state. The VEOC determines the capabilities of the state resources to manage the incident. If the damages or sustained impact of the incident threaten to overwhelm the resources of the Commonwealth, the State Coordinator of Emergency Management may recommend to the Governor that federal assistance be requested.

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The Governor will usually request the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (FEMA Region 3) to send personnel to conduct joint Preliminary Damage Assessments (PDA) of specific sites. The Recovery Transition Team (VERT and FEMA) will coordinate the joint PDAs from the VEOC. The PDAs will target damages identified on the initial reports that are probably eligible for federal assistance through the FEMA Individual Assistance Program, the FEMA Public Assistance Program, or the Small Business Administration (SBA) Disaster Loan Program. State and federal personnel knowledgeable in these programs will accompany local officials to the damaged sites. (See Appendix E)

5. Requests for Federal Assistance under The Stafford Act

The State Coordinator of Emergency Management will report the findings of the PDAs to the Governor and recommend whether to request federal assistance under the Stafford Act. The Governor will then send a letter to the President requesting a declaration of emergency or major disaster for specific localities in the Commonwealth.

In some circumstances, the Governor may request an expedited declaration. When a large scale disaster is imminent, or can be seen on early video reports, it might be obvious that the scope of the event justifies federal assistance. For an expedited declaration the Governor relies on forecasted or visual impact rather than damages verified through the PDA process. (See Appendix E)

6. Recovery Actions

Recovery involves actions needed to help individuals and communities return to normal when feasible. The Commonwealth joins with federal agencies to establish a Joint Field Office (JFO) that serves as the central coordination point among Federal, State, local and voluntary organizations for delivering recovery assistance programs.

Recovery actions typically include the direct financial assistance to eligible individuals who have lost residential dwellings or personal property and the coordination, and execution of service- and site-restoration plans and the reconstitution of government operations and services through private-sector, nongovernmental, and public assistance programs. Voluntary and non-governmental organizations are usually major contributors to rebuilding and recovery activities.

Long-term environmental recovery may include cleanup and restoration of public facilities, businesses, and residences; re-establishment of habitats and prevention of subsequent damage to natural resources; protection of cultural or archeological sites; and protection of natural, cultural, and historical resources from intentional damage during other recovery operations. (See #8 below)

7. Mitigation Actions

Hazard mitigation involves reducing or eliminating long-term risk to people and property from hazards and their side effects. The JFO is the central coordination point among Federal, State, local, and tribal agencies and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) for beginning the process that leads to the delivery of mitigation assistance programs.

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Mitigation activities are designed to identify and implement measures to reduce or eliminate risks to persons or property or to lessen the actual or potential effects or consequences of an incident. Mitigation measures may be implemented prior to, during, or after an incident.

The joint federal-state mitigation unit in the JFO coordinates the delivery of mitigation programs within the affected area, including:

- ❖ Grant programs for loss reduction measures (if available);
- ❖ Delivery of loss reduction building-science expertise;
- ❖ Coordination of Federal flood insurance operations and integration of mitigation with other program efforts;
- ❖ Conducting flood recovery mapping to permit expedited and accurate implementation of both recovery and mitigation programs;
- ❖ Predictive modeling to protect critical assets;
- ❖ Early documentation of losses avoided due to previous hazard mitigation measures; and
- ❖ Community education and outreach necessary to foster loss reduction.

The Hazard Mitigation Branch of the VERT, along with the Infrastructure and Human Services Branches and with State, local, and tribal officials, will participate in the development of a long-term recovery strategy for the impacted area(s)

8. Long-term Community Recovery

The Governor may convene the Economic Crisis Strike Force, authorized in the Code of Virginia³, to facilitate the development of a long-term strategy for the economic and social reconstruction and redevelopment of the affected communities. As outlined in the *ESF #14 Annex*, the strike force will coordinate with federal agencies, private businesses and industries, non-governmental organizations, financial institutions and all sectors of the community to develop plans to rebuild the community, revitalize the economy, protect the environment and reduce the risk of future disasters. The recovery strategy will establish priorities for the infrastructure, housing, human services and the economy of the affected community and its region.

B. Homeland Security Advisory System in Virginia

1. The Commonwealth of Virginia utilizes the national Homeland Security Advisory System (HSAS), an effective means for disseminating information regarding the risk of terrorist attacks and coordinating appropriate response measures across jurisdictions and with the private sector. The HSAS is composed of two separate elements: (1) threat products and (2) threat condition.

- ❖ **Threat products** include warning (advisories) and non-warning (information bulletins) products designed to inform Federal, State, local, tribal, and nongovernmental entities and private citizens of threat or incident information.

³ Code of Virginia § 2.2-205.1

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- ❖ **Threat condition** provides a guide to assist government and private-sector entities in initiating a set of standardized actions as a result of increased terrorist threat levels within the United States, and to inform the public on updated homeland security requirements. The raising of the threat condition generally is reserved for threats that are credible, corroborated, and imminent. An elevated threat condition can be applied nationally or by region, by industry sector, or to a specific target. During an increase in threat condition, DHS may notify, activate, and deploy NRP organizational elements in an effort to enhance the Nation's ability to prevent, prepare for, or respond to an attack. The decision to mobilize NRP organizational elements is based on the nature and severity of the threat. In response to a heightened nationwide risk of attack, DHS may activate the national-level elements and place certain special teams on standby. For geographic-specific threats, DHS, in consultation with DOJ, may activate regional elements and deploy national coordinating elements and special teams to the affected area.
2. The Commonwealth has adopted an alert method called the Virginia Homeland Security Terrorist Threat Conditions, which is similar to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Homeland Security Advisory System. Both systems categorize credible threats at five color-coded levels ranging from green (low threat/low risk) to red (severe threat/imminent risk). The higher the threat condition, the greater the risk of a terrorist attack. Risk includes both the probability of an attack occurring and its potential gravity.

The VA and the DHS systems are reachable from:

<http://www.vaemergency.com/threats/terrorism/toolkit/threatlevels.cfm>

3. The VEOC is in continuous contact with DHS officials and will receive advance notice of any activity by DHS to change the threat level. The Office of Commonwealth Preparedness, as the liaison between the Governor and the DHS, will weigh the information and make a recommendation. The Governor will announce to the public any change in the threat level for the Commonwealth. The VDEM website, **www.vaemergency.com** is the point of contact for the public to monitor the threat level in Virginia.

**Table 1-3
Threat Conditions**

Threat Conditions	Procedures/Guidelines
Green (low)	The federal Homeland Security Operations Center (HSOC) maintains direct connectivity with the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC) and the FBI Strategic Information and Operations Center (SIOC) regarding the terrorist threat and maintains situational awareness through the continued monitoring of reported incidents.
Blue (guarded)	The federal Homeland Security Operations Center (HSOC) maintains direct connectivity with the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC) and the FBI Strategic Information and Operations Center (SIOC) regarding the terrorist threat and maintains situational awareness through the continued monitoring of reported incidents.
Yellow (elevated)	The federal Homeland Security Operations Center (HSOC) maintains direct connectivity with the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC) and the FBI Strategic Information and Operations Center (SIOC) regarding the terrorist threat and maintains situational awareness through the continued monitoring of reported incidents.
Orange (high)	USDHS activates the Interagency Incident Management Group (IIMG) to review the threat information, coordinate interagency activity, and recommend additional precautions needed to prevent, prepare for, or respond to an attack. If the threat is elevated regionally or locally, DHS considers designating a Principal Federal Official (PFO) and activating emergency response teams (ERT) and appropriate Regional Response Coordination Center (RRCC) to coordinate with regional, State, and private-sector entities and notify (or activate) regional resources (such as the ERT) as appropriate.
Red (Severe)	<p>A Severe Condition reflects a severe risk of terrorist attacks. Under most circumstances, the protective measures for a Severe Condition are not intended to be sustained for substantial periods of time. In addition to the protective measures in the previous threat conditions, the following general measures in addition to agency-specific protective measures may be developed and implemented:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increasing or redirecting personnel to address critical emergency needs; ▪ Assigning emergency response personnel and pre-positioning and mobilizing specially trained teams or resources; ▪ Monitoring, redirecting, or constraining transportation systems; and ▪ Closing public and government facilities.

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VI. Ongoing Plan Management and Maintenance

A. Coordination

The Commonwealth of Virginia uses the “preparedness organization” concept described in the NIMS for preparedness and maintenance of the *COVEOP*. The organizations include all agencies with a role in incident management and provide a forum for coordination of planning, training, equipping, and other preparedness requirements.

- The Office of Commonwealth Preparedness (OCP)

Effective July 1, 2006⁴, the Office of Commonwealth Preparedness is established to work with federal, state and local officials, as well as the private sector, to develop a seamless, coordinated security and preparedness strategy and implementation plan. OCP serves as the liaison between the Governor and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. The *COVEOP* is compatible with the OCP strategic plan.

- Secure Commonwealth Panel⁵

The panel is an advisory board of 29 members appointed by the Governor. It is assigned the responsibility to “monitor and assess the implementation of statewide prevention, preparedness, response and recovery initiatives....” OCP provides staff for the panel.

- Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM)

The Code of Virginia assigns the Department of Emergency Management to the tasks to “administer the emergency services and disaster preparedness programs.” It coordinates with political subdivisions and state agencies and with the federal government and any public or private agency or entity to achieve the coordination of comprehensive emergency management in the Commonwealth. VDEM is responsible for the development and maintenance of the *COVEOP*.

Executive Order 65 in 2004 directed every state agency to whom responsibilities are assigned in the *COVEOP* to designate an Emergency Coordinating Officer (ECO) and an alternate to be responsible for ensuring that agency plans and procedures are developed and maintained.

- The Virginia Emergency Response Team (VERT) is comprised of the state agencies and voluntary organizations assigned duties and responsibilities in the *COVEOP*. Each assigned agency has staff designated to respond to the VEOC. Those individuals are expected to participate in VEOC training and exercises, as well as in actual incidents. In addition, members of the VERT are valuable resources to the agency ECOs for developing and updating internal plans and procedures as well as the annual *COVEOP* review and update. The VERT meets at least semi-annually for training and/or exercise participation.

⁴ Code of Virginia § 2.2-304

⁵ Code of Virginia §2.2-306

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B. COVEOP Plan Maintenance

1. The Department of Emergency Management (VDEM) maintains the *Commonwealth of Virginia Emergency Operations Plan (COVEOP)*. The *COVEOP* is reviewed annually and updated periodically as required to incorporate new gubernatorial directives, legislative changes, and procedural changes based on lessons learned from exercises and actual events. The *COVEOP Basic Plan* should be reviewed and adopted by the Governor at least every four years. This section establishes procedures for interim changes and full updates of the *COVEOP*.
2. Changes include additions of new or supplementary material and deletions. No proposed change should contradict or override authorities or other plans now contained in statute or regulation.
3. Any department or agency may propose and develop a change to the *COVEOP*. VDEM is responsible for coordinating review of the proposed change among the primary and support agencies of each affected ESF and any associated agency program areas as required. VDEM will:
 - a. Obtain the official written approval for the change from the appropriate senior officials of the affected agencies; and
 - b. Provide the final change for tracking and review
4. Notice of Change. After coordination has been accomplished, including receipt of the necessary signed approval supporting the final change language, VDEM will issue an official Notice of Change.
 - a. The notice will specify the date, number, subject, purpose, background, and action required, and provide the change language on one or more numbered and dated insert pages that will replace the previous pages in the *COVEOP*.
 - b. Once published, the changes will be considered part of the *COVEOP* for operational purposes pending a formal revision and re-issuance of the entire document.
5. Distribution. VDEM will distribute each Notice of Change to all participating state agencies, FEMA Region III, and local emergency management offices. Notices of Change to other organizations will be provided upon request.
6. Promulgation of the *COVEOP*.

VDEM is responsible for coordinating annual reviews of the *Basic Plan* and annexes and for re-adoption and distribution of the *COVEOP-Basic Plan* every four years or more frequently if the Governor or the State Coordinator of Emergency Management deems necessary. The annual review will consider lessons learned and best practices identified during exercises and response to actual events. Any changes that result from annual reviews will be posted on the VDEM website and circulated to VERT agencies. Prior to the four-year revision, VDEM will convene a COVEOP Plan Committee and revise areas of the plan identified by the committee. VDEM will send the final draft of the revised

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COVEOP to OCP for review and concurrence prior to submitting the plan to the Governor for approval and promulgation by Executive Order.

C. Standards for Other Commonwealth Emergency Plans

The *COVEOP*, including all annexes, is the core plan for emergency operations, and provides the structures and processes for coordinating incident management activities for terrorist attacks, natural disasters, and other emergencies. Following the guidance provided by the *National Response Plan* (NRP), National Incident Management System (NIMS), and other supporting documents, the *COVEOP* incorporates or provides an umbrella configuration for existing state emergency and incident management plans (with appropriate modifications and revisions) as integrated components of the *COVEOP*, as supplements, or as supporting operational plans.

Accordingly, state agencies must incorporate key *COVEOP* concepts and procedures for working with *COVEOP* organizational elements when developing or updating incident management and emergency response plans. Agency contingency plans are based on specific scenarios and planning assumptions related to a geographic area or the projected impacts of an individual hazard. Those plans are identified in ESF Annexes and maintained by the responsible agency. The major hazard-specific plans are incident annexes of the *COVEOP*. All additional emergency response and recovery plans and procedures developed by agencies should be compatible with the *COVEOP*. Agencies are responsible for providing access to current agency plans.

D. Plan Testing, Training and Exercises

The responsible state departments and agencies will conduct training to ensure the *COVEOP* may be implemented in accordance with recommended procedures and guidelines.

The VDEM will conduct an annual VERT exercise (VERTEX) of the *COVEOP*. As required by the Code of Virginia, the exercise will address, among other issues, a prolonged and widespread loss of electric power. In addition, the VERT will participate with FEMA and Dominion Resources, operator of two nuclear power plants in Virginia, in an annual exercise of Incident Annex #3 – *Radiological Emergency Response Plan*. Any planning deficiencies, findings, areas recommended for corrective action, or improvement arising from these two exercises, or any other exercises coordinated from the VEOC, will be considered and corrected by appropriate training, plan update, and/or demonstration in any subsequent exercise or postulated event.

E. Plan Implementation

This plan is effective for execution upon and pursuant to the Executive Order promulgating the same. The State Coordinator of Emergency Management will ensure that this document is subject to annual maintenance, review, and update based on selective evaluations, after-action reports, and new guidance. Responsible state agency contacts should recommend to the State Coordinator, at any time, improvements and changes thereto which are appropriate. The *COVEOP* and any approved changes will be forwarded to all organizations and individuals with responsibilities for implementation of the Plan. Revised pages shall be dated.

This plan shall be placed on the state emergency management website, www.vaemergency.com and shall be accessible to the general public.

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